

1 Q Okay. So, did he enter through the front
2 entrance or through his private office?

3 A I think the front entrance.

4 Q Okay.

5 A But I really don't know for sure.

6 MR. HILL: Yes, sir.

7 BY GRAND JUROR:

8 Q In all the times that the judge's private
9 office door has been opened, has it ever failed to
10 close?

11 A No.

12 Q Has it ever stuck?

13 GRAND JUROR: Or been ajar?

14 A Ajar? I can't -- I don't recall. I
15 can't say yes or no to that question. I just don't
16 know.

17 Q Well, did you ever see it? Do you
18 remember ever seeing that door ajar?

19 A I don't remember ever seeing it, but
20 that, you know --

21 Q You closed it every night, did you ever
22 have a problem where it didn't close?

23 A I don't think so, no.

24 MR. HILL: Yes, sir.

25 BY GRAND JUROR:

1 Q Three real quick questions. In your
2 experience as a judicial assistant, have you ever seen
3 judges come in when, say, a judge is out of town or out
4 of the office, and come in and look for something in
5 their office that maybe they had left behind or
6 actually just ask you, "Do you mind if I go in here, I
7 think I left something behind in this office?" And if
8 so, do you ever follow them?

9 A You mean while I was there did a judge
10 ever come in and ask me if they could go through my
11 judge's office?

12 Q Right.

13 A If they did I wouldn't have allowed them
14 to.

15 Q Okay.

16 A Unless my judge had told me they had
17 permission to do so.

18 Q Okay. Do you know who the judicial
19 assistant for Judge Bonanno is?

20 A Yes, Charlotte, Charlotte McLaurin, I
21 believe is her last name.

22 Q And finally, do the bailiffs have that
23 same master key?

24 A Yes, we all do.

25 Q Okay. So the judicial assistants, the

1 judges, and the bailiffs all have the same key?

2 A Yes. We can all enter anyone's office at
3 any time.

4 Q During a normal business day is that main
5 door there, is that always locked during a normal day?
6 Is it locked all day long?

7 A The main door meaning?

8 Q Into his private office.

9 A Private office? Sometimes it was
10 unlocked.

11 Q It wasn't locked all the time of the day
12 then?

13 A Right, exactly. Sometimes it wasn't
14 locked.

15 Q Thank you.

16 A There were times that I actually went
17 through that door because I had to go and deliver
18 something maybe to Judge Ficarrota's judicial
19 assistant and would have to go out that hallway.

20 When I would go out that hallway, I would
21 unlock the door so that I could come back in that way,
22 but then I would turn around and lock it again. But
23 there were occasions that, you know, Judge Holder went
24 out that door. When he would go to visit Judge
25 Ficarrota, he would always go out that door.

1 Occasionally --

2 Q It wasn't locked then?

3 A Occasionally, I would say, I would call
4 him and he wouldn't be around. It's because he went
5 out that door without telling me he was going out that
6 way.

7 FURTHER EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. HILL:

9 Q Let me clarify something real quick. The
10 break room where Tara and Bailiff Gay would visit
11 frequently, --

12 A Yes.

13 Q -- it has some old files?

14 A Yes.

15 Q A metal file cabinet over here; is that
16 right?

17 A Yes, sir.

18 Q Anything of significance kept in there?

19 A No, sir, just forms and things the
20 judicial assistant uses.

21 Q But that's where they would most commonly
22 visit when they were together?

23 A Yes.

24 FURTHER EXAMINATION

25 BY GRAND JUROR:

1 Q I'm just curious. Is the doorknob there
2 similar to the one that would be --

3 A Yes.

4 Q -- on his private office?

5 A Yes.

6 Q So do you kind of look and see if it's
7 turned sideways locked or --

8 A I never could figure that out quite
9 right, you know, so I would try the outside to make
10 sure that --

11 Q So you actually went outside?

12 A No, I didn't go out. I would just --

13 Q Open it?

14 A Yeah, open it to make sure --

15 Q To make sure, and then close it back?

16 A Yeah. I'm pretty bad about knowing up or
17 down or sideways.

18 Q Right. They are never the same from one
19 door to the next.

20 A Which is locked and which isn't. Right.
21 Right.

22 GRAND JUROR: All right.

23 BY GRAND JUROR:

24 Q Is the -- I don't believe that it's
25 normal when a judge takes the file that we discussed

1 earlier that we were talking about, Judge Holder
2 recused that case, or however you want to put it, that
3 case.

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q And then later on he brought it back to
6 him and he accepted it?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Did he accept the case or take that
9 case --

10 A Well, he --

11 Q Or now normally he wasn't supposed to
12 accept it?

13 A Well, he only accepted it -- we had an
14 unusual -- I need to give you a little scenario as to
15 what's been going on here in Hillsborough County. We
16 have been down four to five circuit judges.

17 We've had judges out ill, they have died,
18 they have moved on to the federal bench, so we've been
19 down four to five circuit judges. And because of that
20 reason a lot of judges have been reviewing cases and
21 doing certain things with cases that normally would not
22 be done if we had a full staff of judges.

23 Q Well, let me ask, is there a legality in
24 there somewhere?

25 A Oh, I don't know. That I could not tell

1 you. You would have to ask a lawyer that.

2 Q That's what I mean. Did he do something
3 illegal by accepting that again? That's what I --

4 A I have -- yeah. No, I have no idea.
5 That you would have to ask an attorney or a judge.

6 MR. HILL: Okay.

7 BY GRAND JUROR:

8 Q I just -- I understand. I just, real
9 quick, about when was that when it came back to Judge
10 Holder?

11 A Probably with -- well, the evening in
12 question is Thursday, July --

13 Q 27th.

14 A -- 27th. I would say within a week or
15 two before that is when the file came back to him.

16 Q Before that, okay. Okay.

17 GRAND JUROR: Quick question.

18 MR. HILL: Yes.

19 BY GRAND JUROR:

20 Q Do you know were Judge Holder and Judge
21 Bonanno, were they friendly, just acquaintances, or --

22 A Well, they were acquaintances in the
23 courthouse, yes.

24 Q Okay.

25 A Friendly, yes.

1 Q Do you know like their professional
2 relationship, was it good, had they had problems?

3 A Good.

4 Q Okay.

5 A Good.

6 MR. HILL: Yes, sir.

7 BY GRAND JUROR:

8 Q When you observed Bonanno, say, I don't
9 know, ex parte or what have you, and you saw his
10 demeanor professionally within this courthouse, was
11 there any difference?

12 A No. He's very even tempered, very
13 soft-spoken, very private.

14 GRAND JUROR: Thank you.

15 MR. HILL: All right. In the interest of
16 time we're going to wrap it up. I want to thank
17 you for being here.

18 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

19 MR. HILL: I want to remind you that that
20 oath says I can't discuss this with anybody
21 anywhere anytime.

22 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

23 MR. HILL: And please respect that.

24 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

25 FURTHER EXAMINATION

1 BY MR. HILL:

2 Q The last question before you leave, I
3 don't want you to walk out and say, "Gosh, I wish I had
4 told them --" anything else on your mind?

5 A Other than what I mentioned to you about
6 Tara Pisano and the journal.

7 Q Please tell me. I'm sorry, it doesn't
8 come back immediately, but I don't want anything hidden
9 from these folks.

10 A Apparently there have been talks,
11 courthouse rumors, that Tara Pisano had a journal that
12 possibly had been hidden in Judge Bonanno's -- in Judge
13 Holder's office. And that possibly Judge Bonanno may
14 have been in there looking for the journal.

15 Tara Pisano, Sylvia Gay, and myself were
16 in the coffee room one day just talking and somehow the
17 conversation came up about a journal. And Tara said to
18 me and Sylvia, "I don't know what they're talking about
19 a journal. I have no journal. My journal is --" and
20 she pulls out of her pocketbook those little book
21 calendars that we all keep that we write our children's
22 appointments and our dental appointments on.

23 She says, "This is what they think is my
24 journal. And look what I have in it. I just have
25 doctor's appointments for my children, appointments for

1 myself. This is what they think is a journal. I don't
2 know what they're talking about." And I thought that
3 was pretty important that I should bring that up.

4 Q Good. We thank you.

5 A Thank you.

6 Q You're dismissed and we appreciate you
7 coming.

8 A Yes, sir.

9 (The witness left the Grand Jury room,
10 and the next witness was called.)

11 Whereupon,

12 SYLVIA B. GAY,
13 was called as a witness, and being duly sworn, was
14 examined and testified as follows:

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION

16 BY MR. HILL:

17 Q Would you state your full name for the
18 Grand Jury?

19 A Sylvia Blanca Gay.

20 Q I've got to encourage you to speak up --

21 A Louder.

22 Q -- so everybody can hear you, okay?

23 A Right.

24 Q You know what we just learned? We just
25 learned that you were Bailiff of the Year last year; is

1 that right?

2 A For the year 2000.

3 Q For the year. Well, congratulations.

4 A Thank you, thank you, thank you.

5 Q How is that awarded? How is that done,
6 by the judges, or by the Sheriff's Office, or --

7 A I believe it's through supervisors, and
8 my judge, and so forth. I really don't know how they
9 go about picking it. I had no idea I was going to get
10 it, no idea whatsoever.

11 Q We've talked a lot of times and you're
12 very modest. You've never told me that before. Where
13 are you employed?

14 A Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office.

15 Q And how long have you been with the
16 Sheriff's Office?

17 A Since 1988.

18 Q Are you sworn law enforcement?

19 A Yes, I am.

20 Q Okay. Your whole career has not been as
21 a bailiff; is that right?

22 A No.

23 Q Where did you start out?

24 A I started out working in records as a
25 Clerk II typist for the Sheriff's Office. And then I

1 was only there probably about eight months. And from
2 there I went into the academy to become a deputy,
3 detention deputy.

4 And from there I worked out -- and I
5 worked in Morgan Street Jail, and from there I was in
6 Orient Road Jail. And then in '93-'94 I became a
7 bailiff.

8 Q Is that an assignment that you had to ask
9 for, or were you sent over here?

10 A It's an assignment that I had to put in a
11 letter and hope they picked me.

12 Q Okay. They obviously did?

13 A Yes, they did.

14 Q How do you like it?

15 A I love it, I really do. I put my whole
16 heart into this job. I really believe in my job.

17 Q Okay. Were you -- and was Tara Pisano
18 also a detention deputy?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Have you known her that long? Did you
21 all work together back then?

22 A I've known her since I started working at
23 the Morgan Street Jail. She was pregnant when I became
24 a detention deputy.

25 And then I didn't see her because she had

1 to go on leave because she was having trouble with her
2 pregnancy. So then I didn't see her again until we
3 went to Orient Road, and then there is where we became
4 really good friends.

5 Q Okay. So you've been good friends for a
6 number of years?

7 A A number of years. Almost my whole
8 career.

9 Q Would you characterize her as your best
10 friend?

11 A Yes, I would.

12 Q Okay. You are assigned to Judge --

13 A Holder, Gregory Holder.

14 Q How long have you been assigned to him?

15 A Probably about four-and-a-half years.

16 Q Were you assigned arbitrarily, or did you
17 ask for it? How did it come about?

18 A I -- when I came over from the jail, I
19 started out with Judge Tharpe in juvenile. And then
20 Judge Tharpe got promoted to, downstairs to criminal.

21 And then Judge Gilbert replaced him
22 temporarily. And then Judge Holder took his place, and
23 I was with Judge Holder then. And when Judge Holder
24 came over to the civil side, he brought me with him.
25 And that's how I -- I've stayed with him ever since

1 then.

2 Q Okay. Do you enjoy working for him?

3 A Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

4 Q I sense a tremendous amount of loyalty to
5 him.

6 A I have a tremendous amount of loyalty to
7 him.

8 Q By the way, I sense it the other way
9 also, from him to you.

10 A Well, that's good. I hope so.

11 Q What are your duties and responsibilities
12 with him?

13 A I'm to really -- I'm there for
14 protection, to maintain control, that type, just a wide
15 variety of jobs.

16 Q Okay. He serves in our military in a
17 capacity, does he not?

18 A Yes, he does.

19 Q Can you tell us what he is?

20 A He is a Colonel. He just got promoted to
21 a Colonel with the United States Air Force Reserves.

22 Q And how demanding is that as far as his
23 time goes?

24 A It's -- it's not as demanding as this job
25 is, but he does court martials and that type of thing.

1 He's called out to do that ever so often.

2 Q Okay. Is he gone predictably every month
3 or --

4 A No, not predictably every month.

5 Q Okay.

6 A Basically when they have trials or so
7 forth, or they need him to come and be a judge for
8 that, that's when he goes. But it's not every month,
9 no.

10 Q Okay. What do you do when he is away?
11 Where do you serve?

12 A When he's not here I rotate. They put me
13 wherever they need another bailiff. I can work
14 criminal, juvenile, civil, anywhere, anywhere they need
15 a bailiff.

16 Q Do you predictably work evenings one or
17 more nights a week?

18 A I was working -- I've been doing it,
19 gosh, since I came over here, working two nights a
20 week. I worked Tuesday nights mediation and Thursday
21 nights I worked Teen Court so that I could have Fridays
22 off. I get two eight hours and two twelve hours, and
23 then I have Fridays off.

24 Q Got you.

25 A So that's how I worked night court.